

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-38 (canceled).

Claim 39 (currently amended): Apparatus for removing broken-out pieces, from a sheet of material which contains blanks and which rests on a female die in such a way that a broken-out portion extends over an opening in a breaking-out surface and is urged away through the opening under the pressure of at least one breaking-out tool, wherein associated with the breaking-out tool is a support means which is movable in a direction of movement of the breaking-out tool and which is rigidly connected in positively locking relationship to the breaking-out surface or female die in an edge region of the opening and which projects into the opening with a support surface which can be inclined with respect to a connection pairing and which in a rest position engages in substantially parallel relationship under the broken-out piece disposed in the sheet of material and which is adapted to be variable in its position upon the movement of the broken-out piece by the breaking-out tool, wherein the connection pairing for the support means comprises at least one undercut receiving groove on the one hand and a portion which can be fitted therein and which extends in the breaking-out direction (x) on the other hand, characterized in that a plurality of cross-sections of the receiving groove and a portion forming a first coupling rib or bar are of a dovetail-shaped configuration, wherein the support means appears in

longitudinal section as an angle portion with at least one coupling rib which is formed out of one of a plurality of limbs for a receiving groove of the female die formed in a limb for a second coupling rib of the female die on the one hand and with a flexible limb forming the support surface on the other hand and ~~wherein the breaking out tool and the support means are arranged such that the broken out piece is inclined relative to the sheet of material in the downward movement of the breaking out tool,~~ wherein the flexible limb forming the support surface has an edge opening which is delimited on both sides by cantilever portions, and at least one inner opening at a spacing in relation to the edge opening.

Claims 40-47 (canceled).

Claim 48 (withdrawn-currently amended): Apparatus as set forth in claim 39, characterized in that arranged downstream, in the breaking-out direction (x), of the limb (24) forming the support surface (25) is at least one catch finger (38), ~~in particular a pair of catch fingers.~~

Claim 49 (withdrawn-currently amended): Apparatus as set forth in claim 39, characterized in that the limb (24) forming the support surface (25) is flanked by side portions which are formed on the other limb (22) and form ~~the~~ a pair of catch fingers (38).

Claim 50 (withdrawn-currently amended): Apparatus as set forth in claim 48, characterized in that the at least one catch finger (38) is enlarged in longitudinal section from its free end (36) towards the limb (22) formed thereon.

Claim 51 (withdrawn): Apparatus as set forth in claim 39, characterized in that the support tool (20<sub>a</sub>) has a partial frame which is substantially U-shaped in cross-section and which comprises a back portion including the coupling rib or ribs (27), with two parallel side walls (23), wherein a support plate (46, 46<sub>a</sub>) is arranged pivotably about an axis (A) between the side walls.

Claim 52 (previously presented): Apparatus as set forth in claim 39, characterized in that said at least one breaking-out tool extends between a plurality of surfaces of the support means, said plurality of surfaces being movable in the breaking-out direction (x).

Claim 53 (previously presented): Apparatus as set forth in claim 39, characterized in that the portion including the support surface is provided at a free edge with at least one edge opening, wherein said at least one edge opening is disposed in opposite relationship to a free end of the breaking-out tool.

Claim 54 (previously presented): Apparatus as set forth in claim 39, characterized in that disposed opposite the support surface as a breaking-out tool is a pressure pin with a rounded free end which is in the form of a rough surface.

Claim 55 (previously presented): Apparatus as set forth in claim 39, characterized in that associated with the support surface as a breaking-out tool is a fork member with one or more finger-like fork prongs.

Claim 56 (previously presented): Apparatus as set forth in claim 55, characterized in that the free end of the fork prongs is

formed by a part-circular curve (43<sub>a</sub> in Figures 18, 23) formed therein or a tip (Figures 30, 31) formed out thereon.

Claim 57 (withdrawn-currently amended): Apparatus as set forth in claim 54, characterized in that the rough surface is formed by a coating (44), ~~in particular a coating with~~ selected from the group consisting of oxides, carbides, and corundum or the like.

Claim 58 (withdrawn): Apparatus as set forth in claim 54, characterized in that the coating (44) is applied by means of thermal spraying.

Claim 59 (withdrawn): Apparatus as set forth in claim 54, characterized in that the rough surface is formed by a coating of plastic material or rubber.

Claim 60 (withdrawn): Apparatus as set forth in claim 54, characterized in that the rough surface is formed by irregularities provided in the surface of the pressure pin (40) or the fork prongs (42, 42<sub>a</sub>, 42<sub>b</sub>), wherein the surface of the pressure pin or the fork prongs (42) is roughened mechanically, chemically or electrically.

Claim 61 (previously presented): Apparatus as set forth in claim 55, characterized in that an axial height (h) of a rough surface corresponds at most to a diameter (d) of the pressure pin or a width of the fork prong.

Claim 62 (canceled).

Claim 63 (previously presented): Apparatus as set forth in claim 55, characterized in that the fork member projects from a plate-shaped male die, wherein the portion of the fork member, which is connected to the male die, has clamping noses.

Claim 64 (withdrawn): Apparatus as set forth in claim 39, characterized by a clip-like tool (68 through 74) which is fixed to the opening (16, 16<sub>a</sub>) and which respectively includes a frame portion (76) from which resilient support tongues (34<sub>b</sub>) project inwardly or on which at least one inwardly disposed support plate (46<sub>b</sub>) is arranged movably about a pivot axis (A).

Claim 65 (withdrawn): Apparatus as set forth in claim 64, characterized by a frame portion (76) which is at least partially curved in plan view or by a substantially rectangular frame portion (76).

Claim 66 (previously presented): Apparatus as set forth in claim 39, wherein said one or more finger-like fork prongs comprise a flat cross-section.